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The Journal of John Tipton

Commissioner to Locate Site for State Capital—1820

(Concluded.)

[NOTE.—The first installment of this journal was copied from Tipton's original manuscript. This part is a reprint from the Indianapolis News, as published by the owner of the MS., Mr. John H. Holliday (see the News, April 17, 1879). In this newspaper version some of Tipton's illiteracies have been dropped.]

Monday 29 a fine clier morning. after breckfast I paid \$3.00 for the co's bill (viz) Bartholomew Durham and myself with Bill the negro. We then set out to look at the country down to the town of Spencer, the seat of justice of Owen county. At 12 stopt on small Branch. Boiled our coffy, 45 p 12. Set out at 15 p 3, crost Fall Creek, continued down the river. at 7 stopt at some Indian camps. Had a pleasant K't, having good (?) shelter and (?) Bark to sleep on.

Tuesday 30th

Couldy morning. Some rain. We set out at 6. At 45 p 7 the Bluffs. Stopt at Whetsalls for B. Paid 37½. Set out at 9. Some rain. Stopt at 12. Found the corner of S 22 & 23, 26 & 27 in T 11, Nor R 1 E. The ground hilly. Good timber. I went out hunting, could not kill anything. Set out at ½ p 1. Saw some clay that we think would make brick. Past a house. Saw a beautifull lake, 1 mile long & 100 yds. wide, clier water, sandy bottom. I am told the river in a high stage runs into it. Went ½ mile west, saw corner of of S 5 & 6, 7 & 8, T 11 N of R 1 E. Land and timber good. Crost the river at ½ p 4, at small prairie through which 2d p meridian runs. We traveled west through a good bottom. Saw a large field new (?). Stopt for the K't with a Mr. Harris who lives on the n. w. qr. of S. 11, T 11, north of R 1, W. Staid 3 days in this neighborhood to rest ourselves and horses.

Wednesday 31. Set out at 5. Traveled west down the path. at 7 came on the river; made coffey. At 10 passed L.

Gass, sec 31, t 11 n, r 2 w; $\frac{1}{2}$ p 12 came to J Harts on sec 21, t 10 n, r 3 west.

Saturday, 3d June. 1820. We paid nothing. Set out from Mr. Harts at $\frac{1}{2}$ p 9 for the mouth of Fall Creek, having been furnished with everything necessary for our journey. The land rather broken, tho' good soil. At $\frac{1}{2}$ p 12 came to a section line. Found the corner of sections 21, 22, 27 and 28 in t 11 north of range 2 west. The north west quarter of section 28 is good land; the timber, sugar, beech, cherry, At $\frac{1}{2}$ p 2 came to the river, Stopt to boil coffy. Staid untill 45 p 3. Set out and traveled through a large bottom, most of which is good land, some part overflowed. The bottom seems to be 10 or 12 miles long and very wide. The timber, sugar beech, walnut hackberry. The under growth is mostly prickly ash, some spice and pawpaw, as is most of the bottom on this side of the river. At 15 p 6 came to the river opposite a very high bluff. Turned up it, and at $\frac{1}{2}$ p 6 crost one part of the river into an island. I shot 147 yards at a turkey and killed it. Here we encamped. The river here is divided into several small shutes or channels. I went on the bluffs to examine them but found them to be from 100 to 200 feet in height, and very uneven on the top. The river at these islands, 7 in number, is very much choked and one part of the old bed for about 250 yards is entirely dry, the water passing through small channels from northeast to southwest, as follows, (One page of the diary has a rough drawing of these seven islands) as near as I could take it down with my pocket compass, which we called the seven islands. This obstruction entirely prevents the pass of any water craft, even the smallest canoe can not pass them at this time, and I am told that the river has been lower than it is at this time.* Here we spent the evening and kt.

Sunday the 4. The morning fine, cool and clier. General

*In the Baskin and Forster atlas map, of 1876, a series of four islands are shown in the southwest corner of Morgan County, some miles below Martinsville. These would seem to be the ones Tipton describes. Of the lake spoken of further on, in the s. e. qr. of s. 5, in T. 11 north, R. 1 E., (which would be immediately southwest of the site of Martinsville,) no trace is now given.

Bartholomew and me set out as soon as light to view those islands to enable me to make the above and foregoing rough draft, which is only to be for my own satisfaction, believing the State legislature will take the earliest opportunity to remove this great obstruction to the navigation of this beautiful stream. We levelled island No. 5, found it about ten feet above the water at the present time. Set out at $\frac{1}{2}$ p 11. Came to the lake on the S E qr of s 5 in T 11 north of R 1 E. I rode out to the east, Found section 4 all level, rich soil and am told that the north half of 9 is also good land.

South half of 34. (?). On the S. E. qr. of 34, T 12 north of R 1 E a house—good spring. Sec. 35 good land.* The timber on this land is white and black walnut, cherry, sugar, hackberry, mulberry, and some beech and hickory. We then traveled s 21 and 16. Both good land with the best of black walnut timber I have seen. Crost a high bluff on the river and at 15 p 4 crost the river to the n w side and stopt to boil our coffy. Set out at 15 p 5 came to the sections 34 & 35 in T 12 n of R 1 E. The south e quarter of s 34 is good land and the n e of 13 T 12 R 1 E. The s e qr of s 35 is the best I have seen, the corner on the bank of White lick creek on which we encamped at dark near a good lick.

Monday the 5—Before I was up Gen'l B and Col. D. went to the lick. The Col. killed a deer.†

We had a good breakfast and set out at 7.

Traveled $\frac{1}{2}$ mile over poor hills then level back land. Some sugar, ash and walnut. At 8 came to the corner of sections 13 & 24 in T 13 north of R 1 E. We then traveled n e $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and crosst White lick creek. The land good. We crosst the creek on a ripple. It is a fine creek and has the appearance of being a fine mill stream. The land mostly level. For some distance the timber, beech, sugar, ash &c. Came to the river at $\frac{1}{2}$ p 9 at a place where the river runs near a hill about 50 feet high. Turned up the bottom. Trav-

* These various sections lie in the immediate vicinity of the Martinsville site.

† This lick, from the description, was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Centerton, near the "Blue Bluffs."

eled near the hill, which is 30 to 50 feet in height of a gradual ascent. The top good upland, the bottom the best soil for duration I have seen on White river. The soil very fine mixed with clay. The timber hackberry, buckeye, sugar, walnut, ash. At $\frac{1}{2}$ p 10 saw a spring which pleases me the best of any I have seen on the river, which I intend to purchase at the sale. A Mr. Brown lives on it; from the hill issues a number of fine springs. At $\frac{1}{2}$ p 11 came to the camp of a Mr. William Sanders (or Landers), covered with young timber. Here I am told was once a French village once occupied by the Delaware Indians, but evacuated by them about 33 years ago.* The land is rich and level; staid $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour. Set out at 15 p 12; stopt at small branch to boil our coffy and venison of which we have plenty. We set out and saw the range line between 2 & 3 east in town 14 north. At 20 p 4 crosst a fine large creek. Eagle creek; large a-plenty to turn a mill. Saw fine land, good timber, crosst the river one mile below the mouth of Fall creek at $\frac{1}{2}$ p 6. where we found the commrs., Gov. Jennings etc., waiting for us: Went to see the surveyor, found his work so much forward as to enable us to finish our business.

Tuesday 6th. A very cool morning. This day we spent in reading and walking around the lines of the sections that we intend to locate, and in the evening returned to our encampment, having removed to the n w side of the river this morning, above the mouth of Fall creek, and stretched our tent on a high bank which we called Bartholomew's bluff, on fractional section number 3, which is part of our location.

Wednesday, 7th, a fine, clear morning. We met at McCormicks, and on my motion the commissioners came to a resolution to select and locate sections numbered 1 and 12, and east and west fractional sections numbered 2, and east fractional section 11, and so much off the east side of west fractional section number 3, to be divided by a north and south line running parallel to the west boundary of said section, as will equal in amount 4 entire sections in r 15 n. of

* See "Indian Towns in Marion County," No. 1 of this Magazine.

R, 3, E, We left our clerk making out his minutes and our report, and went to camp to dine. Returned after dinner. Our paper being ready, B. D and myself returned to camp at 4. They went to sleep and me to writing. At 5 we decamped and went over to McCormicks. Our clerk having his writing ready the commissioners met and signed their report, and certified the service of the clerk. At 6:45 the first boat landed that ever was seen at the seat of government. It was a small ferry flat with a canoe tied alongside, both loaded with the household goods of two families moving to the mouth of Fall creek. They came in a keel boat as far as they could get it up the river, then reloaded the boat and brought up their goods in the flat and canoe.* I paid for some corn and w (?) 62½.

Thursday 17th—A fine cool morning. We rose early. I paid for commissioners \$1.25 and for supper \$1.12½. Col. D paid one dollar and we set out at 15 p 5 for home in company with Ludlow, Gilliland, Blythe, Bartholomew, Durham, Governor Jennings and two Virginians. At 8 stopt on a small creek to boil our coffy for the last time as we boiled the last we had. Set out at 15 p 9. At 45 past 9 crosst a creek. At ½ p 11 crosst a creek. At 1 stopt to boil our baken. Staid until ½ p 2. Set out and at 7 came to John Berry, having traveled about 45 miles over a bad path.

Friday, 9. Clier morning. We set out at 15 p 5. At ½ p 7 came to the upper rapids of drift river. Stopt to let our horses graze. Set out at 9. At 12 stopt at Mr. J. Radcliffe's. Had some bread and milk for our dinner and some corn for our horses. Paid 37½ by B, and set out at ½ p 5 Stopt at Capt. J. Shields, staid all night.

Saturday 10. Clear and very hot. Set out at ¼ p 5. Stopt at Brownstown. Had breakfast; paid 50. Stopt with Col. Durham in Vallonia, who had left us last kt and went home. Stopt at Wm. Grayham's, staid 1 hour. Stopt with Gen. De Pauw, had dinner, and at dark stopt in Salem.

Sunday the 11—Cloudy, some rain. Set out at ½ p 4. At 15 p 6 stopt at Wilcoxes. Had breakfast, paid \$2 by me.

* Who these two families were is nowhere recorded.

Stopt at Major Arganbrites (?), had dinner, etc. At dark got safe home, having been absent 27 days, the compensation allowed us commissioners by the law being \$2 for every 25 miles traveling to and from the plaice where we met, and \$2 for each day's service while ingaged in the discharge of our duty, my pay for the trip being \$58—not half what I could have made in my office. A very poor compensation.

JOHN TIPTON.

Some Early Indiana Taverns

FROM THE PAPERS OF THE LATE J. H. B. NOWLAND

THE writer commenced traveling through the State at the age of ten years, and has kept it up pretty well for nearly fifty, which has given him an opportunity to learn something of the different taverns and their proprietors.

Prerequisite to securing a tavern license was the certificate of a free-holder testifying that the applicant had two spare beds, and two stalls that were not necessary for his own use. Included in the tavern privilege was the right to retail spirituous liquors—this being the only form of liquor license issued in the earlier days. An old man I knew, wishing a license, rented two beds in a neighbor's house and two stalls in his stable. This the neighbor certified to and the license was procured.

There was a class of houses of which no license was required, and these were usually announced on their signs as places of "Private Entertainment."

On the different roads radiating from Indianapolis were many taverns, well known in their day, a few of which may be mentioned. On the Michigan road, south, was Goble's, near Pleasant View; Adkin's, just this side of Shelbyville; Mrs. Loudon's, just beyond the latter place; Boardman's, in Dearborn County. On the Madison road were Isaac Smock's, Mrs. Adams', Widow Thompson's, Chauncey Butler's (this was Ovid Butler's father), and many others. On the Michigan road, north, were George Aston's and Widow Davis'; on the National road, east, were Fuller's, John Hagar's and Beck-